

# TANK NOTES

STATE OF  
NEW MEXICO  
ENVIRONMENT  
DEPARTMENT



... A Newsletter  
from the  
Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau

PUBLISHED BY THE NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Vol. 12, No. 2

Spring/Summer 2002

## State Requirements, Fund Coverage Coming for Above Ground Tanks

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**I**t all began with the approval of Senate Bill 333 during the 2001 legislative session. Changes to state law as a result of Senate Bill 333 charged the Environment Department's Underground Storage Tank Bureau with the task of regulating above ground storage tanks. The Bureau has begun the process of changing its regulations to include requirements for the registration, installation, modification, repair, and closure or removal of ASTs, as well as release detection, record-keeping and financial responsibility. These requirements will parallel the current UST requirements, so you will see requirements being put in place for spill and overfill prevention, corrosion protection, testing, and inspection of equipment and lines. One of the purposes of the new AST regulations is to provide owners and operators with preferred practices and procedures for AST installation, operation and maintenance at service stations, marinas, small bulk plants and other fueling facilities. Another purpose is to provide access to the Corrective Action Fund for cleanup of AST sites.

Toward the end of May, registration forms and other information will be sent to owners and operators identified by the Bureau's preliminary inventory of ASTs in the state. All AST owners or operators, whether identified in the inventory or not, are required to register their tanks and pay tank fees, set by law at \$100 per tank, by September 14, 2002.

The new universe of regulated above ground storage tanks includes any tank with the following characteristics:

- a single tank or a combination of tanks connected by piping, with a volume of 1,100 gallons or more,
- permanently installed,
- used to contain petroleum, including crude oil or any fraction thereof that is liquid at standard conditions of temperature and pressure of 60 degrees Fahrenheit and fourteen and seven tenths pound per square inch absolute, and
- the volume of which is more than ninety percent above the surface of the ground.

[www.storage-tank-vaults.com/  
above\\_ground\\_storage\\_tanks.htm](http://www.storage-tank-vaults.com/above_ground_storage_tanks.htm)



Tanks in vaults and special enclosures are regulated ASTs. Other regulated tanks include those at bulk plant facilities, but not bulk terminals. This distinction means that tanks used for the temporary storage of petroleum prior to delivery to gasoline stations, convenience stores, and commercial accounts, that are smaller than those at bulk terminals, and that are not accompanied by processing equipment, will be regulated. Other tanks that will not be regulated as ASTs include farm, ranch and residential tanks used for non-commercial purposes.

Historically, petroleum products at service stations and other motor vehicle fueling facilities have been stored underground. In response to environmental requirements and emerging technology, a trend toward the installation of ASTs has developed. The New Mexico Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau intends to recommend practices that will minimize the possibility of AST system failure and reduce environmental and fire hazards. With droughts and an increasing population, it is more important than ever to protect our ground water for present and future generations.